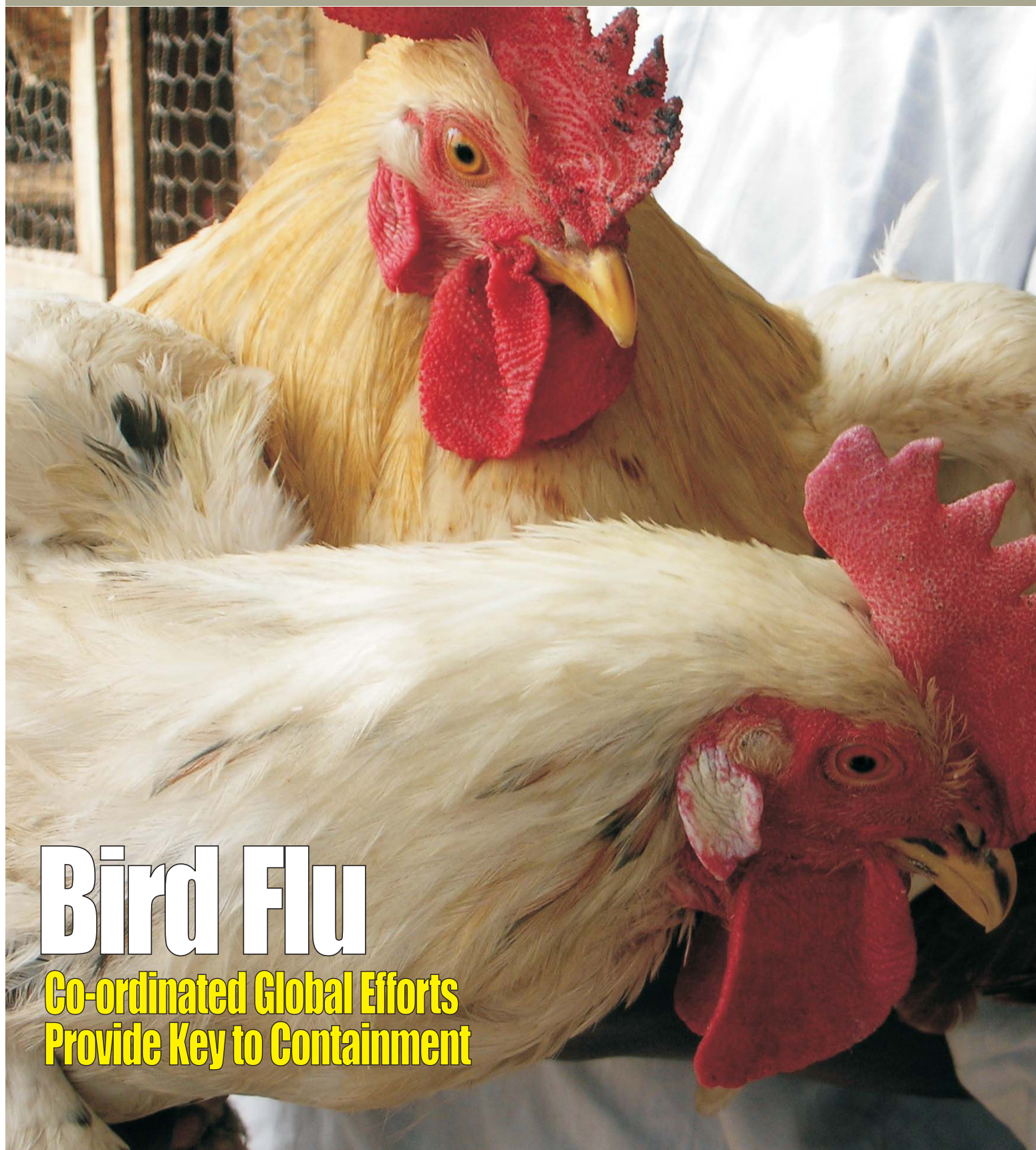


Feb.
& Mar.
2006

CROSSROADS

Vol. 13
Number 2

A Newsletter of the United States Embassy, Nigeria



Bird Flu

**Co-ordinated Global Efforts
Provide Key to Containment**

U.S. Celebrates National Day in February

Americans, joined by Nigerians from different walks of life and the diplomatic community in Nigeria, celebrated the U.S. National Day on February 25 and 28 at the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos and the U.S. Embassy Abuja respectively. In welcoming guests to the occasion in Abuja, U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell said the National Day celebration was moved from July Fourth to the month of February to celebrate President's Day and to accommodate weather conditions. Below are photos taken by *Idika U. Onyukwu* and *Cornelius Oiku* at the Abuja and Lagos events.



U.S. Ambassador John Campbell welcomes Senate President Ken Nnamani.



Ambassador Campbell and Counselor for Public Affairs Mrs. Claudia Anyaso honor the National Anthems.



Chief Judge of Nigeria, Justice Mohammed Uwias, Human Rights Activist Clement Nwankwo and a guest at the occasion.



Kaduna State Governor Mohammed Makarfi being ushered into the National Day celebration in Abuja.



Consul General Brian Browne (l), Cross Rivers State Governor Donald Duke and wife Onari at the U.S. Consulate Lagos event.



U.S. Defense Attache Sue Ann Sandusky in a discussion with Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff General Martin Agwai.

■ PAO's Note



*U.S. Consulate General
Public Affairs Officer
Atim Eneida George*

U.S. Remains Steadfast Partner of Nigeria

The United States Mission to Nigeria recently completed its annual strategic planning exercise. The outcome of our deliberations will come as no surprise to the people of Nigeria. The United States remains steadfast in our commitment to working with Nigerians, both officials and

concerned citizens, to strengthen democratic practices and institutions, arrest the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, promote economic prosperity, prevent regional conflicts and disrupt terrorist networks and criminal organizations. That is a tall agenda. Working together, I am pleased to report, we are making steady progress.

In this edition, we focus our attention on the powerful bilateral partnerships Nigerians and the international communities, including Americans, are forging to meet the challenges of avian influenza (H5N1 flu). In addition to providing accurate,

authoritative information about the flu, this issue provides practical guidance on preventing the transmission of avian flu. We also offer a section on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) During a Flu Pandemic (see page 8).

The importance of youth as the cornerstone for national development is featured in a speech delivered by Ambassador John Campbell at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, challenging Nigerian youth to “look at the world around you and look for ways in which you can effect change” (see page 16).

And there is more. Don't miss Sani Mohammed's reporting on our African American History Month observances in page 14. This edition also features an article co-authored by James Moolom and Susan Jatau covering of the Sixth Annual Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria (FAAN) Conference held in Kano.

As you will see in these pages, the U.S. Mission remains fully engaged, working with Nigerians, to solve problems, foster hope and address real life challenges. Working together, we can increase Nigeria's food security.

Peace, Atim.

CROSSROADS

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Nigeria Battles Avian Influenza (H5N1)

*By Idika U. Onyukwu
with additional reports
from Sani Mohammed*



A chicken seller hawks live chickens at the Sabon Gari Market in Kano. The H5N1 virus was identified in a commercial poultry farm in Sambawa, Kaduna.

On February 7, 2006, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) confirmed the presence of HPAI H5N1 in caged chickens and other birds in Sambawa Farms, a commercial poultry farm in Nigeria's northern Kaduna state after tests by Nigerian officials proved positive for H5N1. As of February 22, **no human** cases had been reported in Nigeria. Subsequent H5N1 outbreaks in poultry on multiple farms in nearby states were also reported. So far, at least 11 states have reported the presence of H5N1 and the virus is spreading rapidly. Poultry and bird mortality rates are high.

According to several international experts, including Dr. David Henzler of the Pennsylvania State Department of Agriculture and Dr. Jan Michaux of the European Union-funded Pan African Control of Epizootics (PACE), the outbreak probably began weeks before H5N1 was detected, probably in Kano state. Large numbers of poultry had died from unidentified causes during the preceding month, prompting initial testing. Extensive sell-offs of poultry across the country have followed the reported detection of H5N1 in many states as poultry owners sought to stem potential H5N1-linked

(© AP/WWP)

Influenza, also called the flu, is caused by a virus. The virus is an organism too small to be seen by the naked eye. The virus is shaped like a ball with two types of "spikes", an "H" spike and an "N" spike, sticking out of the ball's surface. (The H stands for hemagglutinin; the N stands for neuraminidase. These are

both special types of proteins. Unlike the protein you eat, these proteins are not good for you.) A flu virus can have one of 15 different H proteins and one of 9 different N proteins. Scientists name the flu viruses by indicating which H protein is present and which N protein is present. (For example, the virus that caused the



(© AP/WWP)

economic losses.

Nigeria's Response

So far, the Federal Government of Nigeria has responded to the detection of H5N1 by quarantining affected farms, destroying suspected infected birds, a process called "culling" and testing poultry and people who have had close contact with poultry on commercial farms. Information and National Orientation Minister Frank Nweke in a press statement, directed all birds within three kilometers of each infected site to be culled and for presumptive H5N1 cases to be treated as actual cases, pending testing. National and state authorities have formed integrated response teams.

Officials have launched public information campaigns providing safety and education messages about bird flu and advising the public to report bird deaths, and have begun compensation of farmers for losses due to H5N1 control measures. Culling, however, began before compensation policies had been developed, and officials of the Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN) complain that compensation levels are substantially below market value losses. In most cases farmers are being compensated 250 Naira per culled chicken, while market prices can be as much as 1000 Naira in some areas of Nigeria.

Joint federal-state healthcare teams are testing suspected H5N1-exposed persons, such as poultry workers. Testing reportedly has been



A Nigerian health official collects dead chickens for burning at the Sambawa farm, Kaduna where H5N1 was identified in poultry birds on February 7.

stymied due to lack of bird flu testing kits — only symptoms of flu and respiratory infections could be checked — and lack of knowledge by those being tested about what will happen if they test positive for H5N1. Some are said to fear detainment. Nigeria has requested international aid. U.S. officials working with the Nigerian government have created an integrated, national H5N1 action plan and prioritized lists of needs for donors.

U.S. and International Responses

Shortly after the Government of Nigeria confirmed that bird samples from Sambawa farms tested positive to H5N1 influenza, the U.S. government announced up to \$25

million would be made available in technical assistance to Nigeria to combat Avian Influenza as well as a donation of 2,500 personal protective equipment (PPE) to help stem the spread of the disease.

On Tuesday, February 14, in Abuja, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission, Thomas P. Furey, presented samples of the donated gear to the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello. Minister Bello said the quick response by the U.S. and fulfillments of the pledge have demonstrated the strength of the U.S. partnership with Nigeria to contain the Avian Influenza.

U.S. technical assistance and information on how to manage the Avian Influenza helped the Federal

2003-2004 flu was named H3N2.) These "spikes" help the flu virus attach to the cells in your body. Once attached, the virus puts its genetic material into your cells and uses your cells to help make more virus particles. It is this process that makes you ill.

Seasonal Flu: Every year, a flu

virus infects people around the world. This flu is a yearly, or seasonal, event. In the United States, the flu season begins in late December and ends in March.

Bird (Pandemic) Flu: Occasionally, a new virus appears that does not follow the normal seasonal cycle. Pandemic flu will affect people



Government of Nigeria to inaugurate a Public Enlightenment Committee chaired by the Agricultural Minister Alhaji Adamu Bello, who requested a recommendation within 24 hours.

President Olusegun Obasanjo capped this action by convening a meeting of the international and donor community in Nigeria to thank them for their rapid response and material assistance. He announced the establishment of a Crisis Management Center at the Aso Villa Banquet Hall to receive, coordinate and disseminate information regarding the control of the Avian Flu. The Committee is co-chaired by the Ministers of Agriculture and Health with representatives of UN agencies World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the European Union (EU), and the U.S. Agency for International development (USAID) participating. The Federal Government of Nigeria also set up two sub-committees, Technical and Communications. The Technical Committee is headed by Chief Bamidele Dada, Minister of State for Agriculture, while the Communications Committee is headed by Mr. Frank Nweke, Jr, Minister of Information and National Orientation.

The provisional USAID plan on the bird flu outbreak calls for a quick-impact, 120-day program focused on containment, culling, prevention, eradication, and recovery. USAID has draft plans for longer-term assistance



U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas P. Furey (left) presents samples of donated personal protective equipment to Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello.

and has deployed a veterinarian with expertise in epidemiology, an expert in agricultural policy and livestock, and a communications/behavioral change specialist to Nigeria. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) officials are working closely with the FAO, OIE, and WHO in Nigeria, assisting with testing for H5N1, and providing virus control and public health policy advice and other technical assistance. These agencies have called for the intensification of measures that Nigerian officials are already implementing, such as quarantining affected sites, culling infected flocks, undertaking disinfection and hygiene measures, and closing poultry markets in affected states.

WHO has offered to aid Nigeria's public information efforts and to provide assessment teams, H5N1

testing, prevention, and logistical aid, in coordination with ongoing WHO backed national polio immunization efforts. WHO has already provided 10,000 doses of Tamiflu to Nigeria and plans to deliver 250,000 doses.

International assistance efforts continue to boost Nigeria's containment program on the bird flu outbreak. The U.N. office in Nigeria is facilitating frequent donor coordination meetings, and the World Bank has agreed to provide up to \$50 million in emergency credit to help Nigeria to counter H5N1. The UK has provided 15,000 PPE units to Nigeria.

Regional Context

Nigeria's northern neighbor - Niger Republic has confirmed reports of H5N1 in a town bordering Nigeria.

worldwide and can appear at the same-time-as seasonal flu. Pandemic flu, however will cause many more deaths than seasonal flu. Currently, there is a flu virus in birds, called H5N1, that is of extreme concern to health officials. In Asia and recently in Nigeria, H5N1 has already killed large

numbers of chickens, ducks and geese that farmers raise for food. The virus can pass between wild birds and farmers' birds, causing it to spread worldwide. The virus can change slightly (mutate) and be able to pass from birds directly to humans. H5N1 symptoms are the same as seasonal flu: . Fever, Body ache, cough, and fatigue.



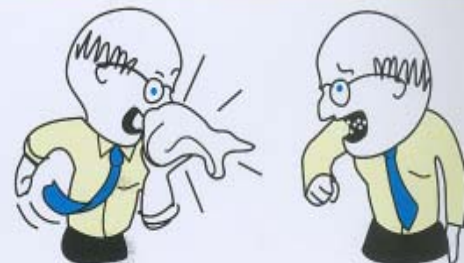
(© AP/WFP)

What You Can Do

FOUR SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue
- Put your tissue in the trash can
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands



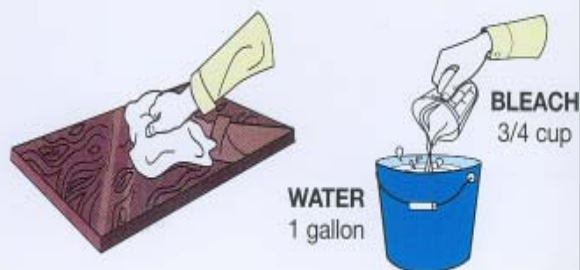
WASH YOUR HANDS

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 10-15 seconds OR use a hand sanitizer after:
 - Coughing or sneezing
 - Using the bathroom
 - Caring for a sick person
 - Handling garbage or animal waste



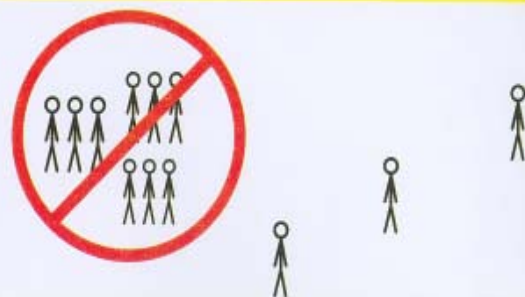
KEEP LIVING AND WORK AREAS CLEAN

- Clean areas with household detergents (dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, hand soap).
- Sanitize surfaces with bleach or alcohol



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

- Avoid crowds
- Limit your travel
- Travel to and from work during off-peak hours, if possible
- Work from home, if possible



There are many common sense, non-medical steps you can take to protect yourself, your coworkers and your loved ones. Following these procedures can significantly limit the spread of the virus—both H5N1 and the virus causing seasonal flu.

Nigeria's western Neighbor Cameroon has confirmed an outbreak in the North near the Nigerian border. Multiple African countries have banned imports of poultry from Nigeria after H5N1 was reported there, and many are implementing measures, in many cases starting several months ago, to monitor and detect outbreaks in their territories, and to monitor imports of poultry, in line with advice from OIE, WHO, and FAO. In January 2006, at the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa in Mali, 18 West African countries reportedly discussed bird flu contingency planning. There are four African countries with laboratories that are part of the WHO Global Influenza Network and are able to diagnose H5N1. Lab personnel from several other countries are being trained to detect H5N1, and labs in several other countries reportedly possess trained workers but lack adequate equipment and supplies.



A market woman in Tejuosho Market Lagos prepares chicken for sale.

In October 2005, the WHO issued an H5N1 risk assessment for Africa. It found that "there are multiple opportunities for human exposure" to H5N1 in Africa, mostly associated with widespread domestic poultry husbandry, processing, and

Wins:

Working in collaboration with the Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN), the Federal Government of Nigeria has formed the following committees to contain the spread of Bird Flu:

- * Epidemiology and Surveillance
- * Depopulation and Decontamination
- * Compensation and Restocking
- * Investigations
- * Implementation/ Crack Team

(Source: Poultry Association of Nigeria)

Losses:

- * Investments totaling N2 trillion threatened
- * Over 40 million jobs within the poultry industry may disappear.
- * Chicken and eggs are an essential source of protein. It is not uncommon for diseases like kwashiorkor to increase due to decreased protein intake.
- * White meat (chicken) and fish are medically recommended for persons with increased cholesterol, hypertension and diabetes. This set of people maybe at risk.

Frequently Asked Questions on Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

What is avian influenza (bird flu)?

Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, avian influenza is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

How does avian influenza spread among birds?

Infected birds shed influenza virus in their saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Susceptible birds become infected when they have contact with contaminated excretions or with surfaces that are contaminated with excretions or secretions. Domesticated birds may become infected with avian influenza virus through direct contact with infected waterfowl or other infected poultry or through contact with surfaces (such as dirt or cages) or materials (such as water or feed) that have been contaminated with the virus.

Do avian influenza viruses infect humans?

Bird flu viruses do not usually infect humans, but more than 200 confirmed cases of human infection with bird flu viruses have occurred since 1997.

How do people become infected with avian influenza viruses?

Most cases of avian influenza

infection in humans have resulted from direct or close contact with infected poultry (domesticated chicken, ducks, and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with secretions and excretions from infected birds. During an outbreak of avian influenza among poultry, there is a possible risk to people who have direct or close contact with infected birds or with surfaces that have been contaminated with secretions and excretions from infected birds.

What are the symptoms of avian influenza in humans?

Symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical human influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress syndrome), and other severe and life-threatening complications. The symptoms of avian influenza may depend on which specific virus subtype and strain caused the infection.

How is avian influenza detected in humans?

A laboratory test is needed to confirm avian influenza in humans.

Is there a risk of avian influenza by eating poultry? There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection for avian influenza. ❖

Fulbright Alumni Promote Democratic Practices and Mutual Understanding

By Susan Jatau and James Moolom
U.S. Embassy Abuja

As part of in-country alumni activities, the Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria (FAAN) held its 6th annual conference at Bayero University, Kano (BUK) February 14 through 16, 2006. The event, which was aimed at promoting alumni networking and keeping alive the spirit of the Fulbright Program, attracted Fulbright alumni from 30 universities across the country. Several dignitaries including Ambassador John Campbell and the representative of the Governor of Kano State attended the opening ceremony. The conference was an outstanding gathering of Nigeria's top notch scholars and highlighted the role of exchanges in promoting international friendship and mutual understanding.

Speaking at the opening ceremony U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. John Campbell said, one of the objectives of the Fulbright Program is "to bring a little more knowledge, a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby increase the chance that nations will learn to live in peace and friendship."

On the theme of the conference Ambassador Campbell said "while ties between our two countries remain strong, our relations are vastly complicated by the challenges we currently face and those we anticipate in the future...we no longer live in a bi-polar world, but in a multi-polar world where new political and economic associations emerge daily." He said this has resulted in a more complicated and more compelling bilateral relationship between Nigeria and the U.S.

President of the Fulbright Alumni



U.S. Ambassador John Campbell (right), confers with Kano State Commissioner for Agriculture Alhaji Ibrahim Garba during the 6th FAAN annual conference in Kano.

Association of Nigeria, Malam Abubakar Sokoto Mohammed, said the conference theme was deliberately chosen to promote better understanding and enhance bilateral relations between the United States and Nigeria.

Malam Sokoto praised the support provided to FAAN by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. He specifically mentioned the support that enabled two members to attend the conference of the Fulbright Association in Baltimore. The presentation by Nigeria was well received and Nigeria was appointed to represent Africa on the Best Practices Committee of the Global Fulbright Project.

Malam Sokoto emphasized that most of the conference papers analyzed Nigeria issues and proffered solutions drawn from the US Fulbright experience.

One such solution is the work-study program, which Dr. Stella Williams of

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, said, has brought hope to about 300 students of the university. She is recommending a similar model to other Nigerian universities.

Another example of the impact that Nigerian Fulbrighters are making in nation building was revealed in a presentation by Professor Daniel Adene of the University of Ibadan who was the first to diagnose the avian influenza outbreak in Nigeria.

Papers were also presented on a wide range of topics and participants were exposed to methods for writing strong Fulbright proposals and sourcing information on the web.

The third volume of FAAN papers, entitled "Security, Social Services, and Sustainable Development," was presented by Professor Chidi Ikonne of the University of Port Harcourt. The book is a compendium of proceedings of the 5th annual Fulbright conference and was recommended as a good resource material for research.❖

U.S. Embassy Engages Muslim Youths on Federalism in Kano

As part of its efforts to explain U.S. society and values to Nigerian communities, the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section traveled to the Emirate of Kano to engage university youth in a lively presentation on "Federalism and Law Enforcement in the United States." The program was held at the Bayero University, Kano (BUK) on February 17, 2006. Robert Downey, Attaché for Law Enforcement Assistance, engaged students in a lively and frank question and answer session that lasted almost 90 minutes. Mr. Downey explained aspects of U.S. federalism as well as U.S. Law enforcement assistance programs to Nigeria.

The program took place during the annual meeting of the Fulbright Association of Nigeria in Kano.❖



A cross section of Bayero University students Kano, listen attentively to Robert Downey's remarks during the discussion on U.S. Federalism and Rule Law.

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —

...Muslim Sisters Organization Gets Computer Equipment



U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Claudia Anyaso (*in hat*) and the Country Information Resource Officer Henry Mendelsohn (*third left*), recently met with official of the Muslim Sisters Organization (MSO), an NGO with a primary objective of promoting girls education in Kano, and donated a set of computer equipment to facilitate the MSO's outreach programs.❖

Consular Dept of State Lengthens Time for Student Visas

The U.S. Department of State has announced an extended length of time foreign students may be issued student visas. This new regime is one of the elements of the recently announced Rice-Chertoff Joint Vision which will enhance border security while streamlining security processes and facilitating travel for visitors to the United States.

Students applying for initial-entry F-1, F-2, and M-1 and M-2 visas may now be issued those visas up to 120 days before their academic program start date (as compared to 90 days under previous regulations). J-1 and J-2 visitors may be issued visas at any time before the beginning of their programs.

These changes apply only to initial-entry students. Continuing students may apply for new F or M visas at any time, as long as they have maintained their



Prospective Students to U.S. institutions receive free educational counseling every Wednesday by the U.S. Embassy Abuja and the Consulate Lagos Centers at 9 and 11 a.m.

student status and their Student and Exchange Visitor Information (SEVIS) records are current.

As part of the Joint Vision announced by Secretaries Rice and Chertoff, this change reflects our ongoing commitment

to ensuring the safety of our citizens and our visitors by keeping our borders secure, while also taking significant steps to ensure that our doors remain open to those seeking to visit, study or conduct business in the U.S. ❖
<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

U.S. Donates Operational Equipment to the Nigeria Police

“In an era of global terrorism and increasing violence,” says U.S. Ambassador John Campbell “the need for a competent, well trained and equipped police force cannot be overly stressed.” Ambassador Campbell was speaking at the official handover of operational equipment to the Nigerian Police Force at the Force Headquarters Abuja on March 1, 2006.

Items presented include megaphones, boots, gloves, handcuffs, shields, pepper spray, body armor, shin protectors, elbow pads, and many other items necessary for the police force to operate at its best. Inspector General Sunday Ehindero received the donated items on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The Nigeria Police continues to face daunting challenges in the preservation of law and order over time. The recent sectarian disturbances in Kano, Bauchi and Onitsha constitute added challenges



U.S. Ambassador John Campbell and the Inspector-General of Police Sunday Ehindero, inspect some of the donated items at Police Headquarters Abuja.

to keeping law and order. Since 2002, the U.S. Government has donated over two million dollars to the Federal Government of Nigeria for training in such areas as

anti-corruption, anti-human trafficking, narcotics and drug interdiction, police modernization, community policing and financial fraud. ❖



U.S. Foreign Commercial Service Officials and the Consulate General Public Affairs Officer Atim E. George (fifth right sitting), pose in a group photo with awardees of the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service International Business people award.

U.S. Commercial Service Honors International Business People

Twenty distinguished companies and individuals were honored at the Foreign Commercial Service “Networking with USA” (NUSA) awards on Monday, March 6. The Foreign Commercial

Service (FCS) annual awards program highlights the achievements of distinguished Nigerian business leaders.

In remarks at the occasion, the Consulate General Public Affairs Officer Atim George, encouraged

business leaders to continue their efforts in fostering deeper commercial ties between the U.S. and Nigeria.

Some of the dignitaries present at the award ceremony included the President Nigeria-America Chamber of Commerce Dr. Olusola Dada, Chairman Hamza Holdinds, Alhaji Hamza, Vice President Abro International Tim Bemaris and the U.S. Commercial Attache JoAnna McInerney.

The annual awards program affords the U.S. Commercial Service the opportunity to showcase numerous success stories in bilateral commercial relations with Nigerian businesses and contacts.

The U.S. Commercial Service in Nigeria is located at the American Consulate General in the country’s commercial center, Lagos. FCS assists small-to-medium sized U.S. companies in exporting to Nigeria, in addition to facilitating and protecting business interests of U.S. companies operating in the country.



Lagos Business tycoon and CEO/Chairman Hamza Holdings, Alhaji Hamza (fourth left), receives his award from U.S. Consulate Public Affairs Officer Atim George at the recognition of international Business people by the FCS Lagos.

■ <http://www.buyusa.gov/nigeria> ■



(© AP/WIDEWORLD)

President Bush gives his wife Laura all the backings during the First Lady's meeting with women in commemoration of the 2006 International Women's Day at the White House.

First Lady Laura Bush Salutes Women on International Womens' Day

“**E**very year, citizens around the world commemorate International Women’s Day. I’ve been privileged to meet thousands of women from many nations, and I believe that women everywhere share the same dreams — to be educated, to live in peace, to enjoy good health, to be prosperous, and to be heard.

"There are encouraging signs for progress for women in many parts of the world, and I'm proud to be married to a man whose policies promote this success. But don't just take my word for it. Look at his administration, where strong and talented women serve at the very top levels of government.

"Consider his policies in Africa. Girls go to schools there, thanks to scholarships from the African Education Initiative. Women receive antiretroviral drugs and deliver babies free of HIV because of the

President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. In Afghanistan, young girls go to school and women serve in government because America helped liberate the Afghan people. Last week in Kabul, Dr.

Karzai, the wife of President Karzai, told me that six million Afghan children are now in school, and nearly half of that number are girls.

"As we celebrate International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month, we honor men and women who work together to advance justice, dignity, and opportunity for women."❖



First Lady Laura Bush poses with Sisters of St. Mary's Catholic Hospital Gwagwalada, Abuja during her January 17 visit to Nigeria. The center is dedicated to the testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

2006 African-American History Month Pays Tribute to Black Fraternity and Civil Institutions

By Sani Mohammed
U.S. Embassy Abuja

In commemoration of this year's African-American History Month, the Public Affairs Sections, both in Abuja and Lagos hosted a series of events to acknowledge the contributions of African-Americans to the growth of America in particular and global development in general.

Mrs. Hope Sullivan-Masters opened the program in Abuja with a press briefing on February 9th. She spoke about the contributions of her late father, the Reverend Leon Sullivan, in building fraternal linkages between the people of the United States and the people of Nigeria. She also spoke of the ability of Reverend Sullivan to bring world leaders together, author principles of social responsibility, and inaugurate action-oriented programs.

Reverend Sullivan, a man of tremendous courage, passed away on April 24, 2001. The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation was established in 2001 to preserve his life and legacy, but also to promote the principles of self-help to empower underprivileged peoples. The Foundation's second summit in Nigeria is scheduled for July 2006. The first summit was held in Abuja in 2003 and was attended by President George W. Bush with President Olusegun Obasanjo as the Chief Host.

Speaking on this year's African-American History Month commemoration, the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer Shirley Lisenby, said that issues covered at various events included dialog on civic engagement, constitutional rights, rule of law, democracy, good governance and economic development. She also shared background information about inauguration of African-American History Month.

One of the events organized at the American Corner in the Bola Ige Information Technology Center, Abuja, was



U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer Shirley Lisenby (second right) briefs the press on the theme of the 2006 African-American History Month flanked by Mrs. Hope Sullivan-Masters and Hward Sullivan.

a lecture on "Building Democratic Institutions in an Emerging Democracy," followed by a roundtable discussion led by Mississippi State Senator Hillman Terone Frazier and Representative Saudatu Sani, Chair of the Nigerian House of Representatives Committee on Women Affairs.

At the meeting attended by a cross section of Nigerian officials and civil society, Senator Frazier, who represents District 27 in Hinds County, Mississippi, recommended meaningful dialogue as a major ingredient in building a democratic institution. Using musical notes for political analogy, Senator Frazier said that dialogue cannot be complete in music without utilizing all of the keys on the musical instrument. "It takes many keys to play the national anthem of Nigeria and the United States. You cannot have dialog with just one key," he advised.

Other ingredients, according to Frazier, are the recognition of basic human rights, and a system of checks and balances. He recalled the contributions of two great American Women and civil rights leaders who passed on recently, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King and urged the Nigerian society to learn from the African-Americans' struggle for inclusiveness.

In addition, the Public Affairs Section hosted weekly lunchtime film screenings during the month of February. Such films as *Amistad*, *Mama Flora's Family* and *Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* were viewed by Embassy staff. The Embassy's Education Advising Center also screened a film on the legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at its orientation sessions with members of the public at the Federal Capital Territory's Center for Arts and Culture. ❖

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Records Life-Saving Results in Nigeria

At a recent media briefing organized by the Public Affairs Section of the U. S. Embassy in Nigeria to highlight the field work of Harvard APIN, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC's) partner on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief PEPFAR, journalists learned that Nigeria now ranks among the top 5 HIV/AIDS epidemic countries in the world. Harvard APIN's National Clinical Coordinator Dr. Ernest Ekong acknowledged that with a population of more than 120 million and a national HIV prevalence rate of 5%, Nigeria accounts for 10% of the world-wide disease.

Through the efforts of Harvard APIN, 7 PEPFAR Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) sites have opened with over 12,000 patients receiving ART and an additional 16,800 patients on HIV-related care. 25,000 pregnant



Harvard APIN Principal Investigator Prof. Phyllis Kanki (third right) making remarks at the Thursday PEPFAR Briefing in Abuja.

women have received testing and counseling in an effort to significantly reduce levels of mother to child transmission. Through the regular training of health care providers at 25 National ART treatment centers in Nigeria, Harvard (APIN) have provided indi-

rect support for an additional 12, 000 patients currently receiving treatment through the Nigeria National ARV Program. The briefing was attended by CDC's Chief of Party John Vertefeuille and Harvard APIN Principal Investigator Prof. Phyllis Kanki. ❖

Ambassador Campbell Meets the Press to Discuss U.S. - Nigeria Relations



Ambassador John Campbell responding to questions from journalists in Abuja while journalists in Lagos listen via Digital Video Conferencing.

U.S. - Nigeria relations was the topic of a robust discussion Thursday 16, when U.S. Ambassador John Campbell engaged more than 45 journalists via satellite. Using digital video conferencing, Ambassador Campbell fielded questions from journalists in Abuja and Lagos. Issues discussed ranged from the current Niger Delta hostage crisis, U.S. President Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the rumored third-term ambition of President Obasanjo, the Bird Flu Spread, Charles Taylor's extradition for war-crime charges, Nigeria's Narcotics trafficking and Decertification, Terrorism, Census 2006, Visa denial and the revocation of Visas issued to corrupt government officials.

The weekly Public Affairs Section Thursday Media briefing provided an effective platform for the dialogue. ❖

<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

"Youths are the Cornerstone for National Development" - Ambassador Campbell

*U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell visited the historical city of Ile-Ife on Thursday, February 9, as guest speaker to the **Achiever's Forum** Annual Lecture, Obafemi Awolowo University. Below are excerpts of Ambassador Campbell's remarks.*

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude and appreciation to the Director of the Peace Education Center of this University. Thank you for inviting me to address you this morning and to share a portion of this special day with members of the Achiever's Forum.

I understand that the purpose of the Forum is to promote the development of youth initiatives and youth organizations—a highly laudable goal. Keeping this goal in mind, the topic I have selected for my talk this morning is, "Youth as the Cornerstone for National Development."

Youth are an important segment of the population in every country, but especially in developing countries where 50 % of the population is often 18 years of age and younger.

When the numbers of youth are great, their impact on a country's resources can be immense. In fact, a significant portion of a government's budget is spent in meeting the education and health needs of young people. Youth are, in turn, a country's greatest asset.

And this brings me to the importance of the word "cornerstone" in the title of my speech. One of my hobbies is to study the architecture of old buildings. In pursuit of this hobby, I have traveled extensively to view many historic buildings first hand. And, I can assure you that a "cornerstone"—far from being a decoration—is basic to the construction and stability of a building. So, too, are young people basic to the development and stability of a



U.S. Ambassador John Campbell

nation. In many instances, it is the youth who are responsible for realizing a nation's aspirations and dreams.

For example, in my own country, during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, it was students—often from historically black colleges in the south—who began the sit-in protests at public lunch counters to dramatize the inequities of racial segregation in a democratic society. It was also student teach-ins and protests in the 1970s that contributed to the end of the US role in the Vietnam War. And in the 1990s, it was the energy and creativity of young university students and graduates who were responsible for advancing the Internet and "Dot.Com"

revolution that changed the technology of businesses and governments around the world.

African youth have also contributed to the advancement of their countries. Young African students, many trained abroad, were in the forefront of the fight for independence from colonial rule. They were the Azikiwes, Nkrumahs, Nyreres, and Senghors who led their countries to independence.

The common thread in the achievements of these students is the university. And the question you have to ask yourselves is, "What is it about the university that inspires students to action?" In paying tribute to English universities many years ago, John Masfield said that he admired the beauty of the university because, "it was a place where those who hate ignorance may strive to know and those who perceive truth may strive to make

others see." In other words, these students gained knowledge in the university and applied that knowledge to the world around them. The reality of what they saw was not to their liking and they set about to change it.

This brings me back to today, at the Obafemi Awolowo University and to the Achievers Forum. What do you see, and is it to your liking?

While you consider this question, let me share with you some interesting statistics. One of the very important programs that my government is working on with the Federal Government of Nigeria and many NGOs is President Bush's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS

relief. You may not realize it, but at least 4 million Nigerians are infected with the HIV virus — that is one tenth of the world's total population of persons infected with HIV/AIDs. During her January visit to Nigeria, Mrs. Laura Bush announced that the US Government will allocate \$163 million in 2006 to assist Nigeria in its fight against HIV/AIDs. There is still much work to be done to stem the HIV/AIDs pandemic in Nigeria.

Another health issue that America is working on jointly with the Nigerian government is poliomyelitis, commonly referred to as polio. The United Nations and many world governments, including my own, have worked the last few years to eradicate polio from the world.

In most countries it will be eradicated next year. At the end of 2005, the total number of cases of polio in Nigeria was 763 cases. These 763 cases accounted for 41% of the world's wild poliovirus cases and 94 % of the cases in Africa. It is essential that efforts in Nigeria be redoubled if it is to join the world in eradicating this dreaded disease.

Another area of joint interest between the US and Nigeria is women's literacy. Statistics show that when women are educated the health and economic prosperity of the entire nation improves exponentially. The Nigerian National Population Commission reports that the national average of women's literacy in 2005 was 48.2 %, which means that some 51.8 % of Nigerian women are illiterate. Enhancing the education of women is a sure path to increased overall development and I salute the efforts being made by the Nigerian federal, state, and local governments to address this issue.

And as all of you well know, unemployment, especially among graduates, male and female, is extremely high. The PRISMS program is one attempt by the US Government to address the issue of unemployment in Nigeria. PRISMS stands for "Promoting Improved Sustainable Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Services." PRISMS is a U.S. funded program designed to work with commercial banks to facilitate lending to micro, small and medium enterprises through microfinance

institutions. This is another challenge that must be overcome. Reducing unemployment and eradicating poverty must become a priority for us all.

There is much more work to be done in these areas and many others. Altogether, they constitute an enormous challenge. But take heart, there is a wise African proverb that says, "When there is a mountain in your path, do not sit at its foot and cry, get up and climb it."

As a university student, you are a privileged member of Nigerian society. Consequently, your parents, your teachers, your family and your community expect much of you. You are expected not only to achieve your personal and professional goals but you are expected to answer the call to public service. Nigeria needs you to assist with the achievement of its development goals in health, education, employment and the whole host of goals in other development areas.

But, my purpose here today is not to persuade you to sacrifice your own well being for the well being of others. No. My purpose today is to challenge you to realize your own dreams and in doing so contribute to Nigeria's development. This brings me, then, to the role of the Achiever's Forum.

If the world about you is not to your liking, how will you change it? This is my challenge to all Forum members.

Perhaps the stories of two American achievers can provide you with some ideas.

In his autobiography, Booker T. Washington, said, "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has to overcome to succeed." Washington was speaking from experience. Born a slave in Virginia, he attended Hampton University and founded Alabama's Tuskegee Institute in 1881. He believed the freedom of former slaves would be realized by education in the crafts, industrial and farming skills, and the cultivation of the virtues of patience, enterprise and thrift. He was the most powerful African-American of his day. You can learn more about Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute from the exhibit on Black Colleges and Universities that we have mounted in the rear of this auditorium

to celebrate African-American History Month.

My second story is about Benjamin Franklin, one of America's best-loved Founding Fathers. We are celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of his birth this year. During his 84-years of life, he was America's best scientist, inventor, diplomat, writer and business strategist, and he was also one of its most practical political thinkers. His biographer describes him this way, "He proved by flying a kite that lightning was electricity, and he invented a rod to tame it. He devised bifocal glasses and clean-burning stoves, charts of the Gulf Stream and theories about the contagious nature of the common cold. He was a pioneer of do-it-yourself civic improvement, launching such schemes as a lending library, volunteer fire corps, insurance associations and matching-grant fund raisers. In foreign policy, he created an approach that wove together idealism with balance-of-power realism.

In politics, he proposed seminal plans for uniting the colonies and creating a federal model for national government. And he was the person most responsible, of all the Founding Fathers, for instilling in the new nation the virtue that is central to America's role in the world today: that of tolerance, specifically religious tolerance."

Historians have identified the great struggles of the 20th century as struggles against fascism and communism. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the great struggle of the 21st century is between the forces of "fanatic fundamentalism" and the forces advocating tolerance. Yesterday, I made remarks at a conference at the University of Ibadan titled, "Islam, Terrorism and Africa's Development." I described the conference as "a common quest for knowledge, for understanding, and for peaceful engagement with other peoples and cultures."

Benjamin Franklin would have felt right at home at the Ibadan conference. It was Franklin who helped formulate the creed that we would all be better off, personally and economically, if we embraced an attitude of tolerance.

FULL TEXT OF SPEECH AT
<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

Nigerian Abdulhafeez Lawal is U.S. Alumnus of the Month

Abdulhafeez Lawal of Nigeria is an alumnus of the 2004-2005 Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program who is committed to the betterment of his country.

Like many exchange alumni, Abdulhafeez's exchange experience affected him deeply. "The program developed me academically, socially, morally and also made me a better judge of people that are different from me. I discovered that difference is good and not bad."

When asked what is the most important thing he learned on his exchange program, Abdulhafeez replied that it was "learning to acclimatize to a different society."

In fact he seems to have had little difficulty becoming acquainted with his new community while in his exchange program. He attended John F. Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and performed well academically. In addition to his studies, Abdulhafeez also took an active role in his adopted community by attending conferences such as the Global Youth Leadership Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. He also volunteered for community service projects, including participating in World Food Day, planting trees, and erecting a peace pole in Newton, Iowa that says, "Let peace prevail on Earth" in eight languages. Upon returning to Nigeria, Abdulhafeez has committed himself to serving his community, at both the local and national level. At his school in Nigeria, he has become the pioneer coordinator of a newly formed Peace Club, which he describes as a "forum to spread peace, where we train youth to be peace lovers and to become mediators to help resolve conflict among their peers."

Due to his enthusiastic commitment to improving his community, Abdulhafeez was selected to participate in a three-week Global Citizen Journey conference held in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria between late November and early December 2005. During this program he helped build a library for Oporoza, a rural community in Warri, Nigeria and participated in workshops on conflict resolution, peace building and leadership development.

Upon returning from his Global Citizen Journey, Abdulhafeez encouraged YES alumni to work together harmoniously for the development of their communities. His efforts earned him the respect of his fellow YES alumni, who elected him to be the National Secretary General of the YES Alumni Association in Nigeria last October during their first annual meeting in Kaduna, Nigeria. In August 2005, Abdulhafeez and four other YES students spoke about their experiences in the U.S. and the tremendous change it has made on their lives. A national organization called the Peace and Development Initiative also nominated him to be a member of the organization's board of trustees in August 2005 because of his diligence and contribution to the organization's development. His ability to connect with people in person and through radio and television has made him an outstanding leader among exchange alumni and in his community. ❖



Photo top: Abdulhafeez Lawal in Nigeria colors during his school athletic tournament.

The 6th Annual Fulbright Conference, Kano

The Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria (FAAN) held its 6th annual conference in Kano from February 14 -17 with the theme "U.S. - Nigeria Relations and the Challenges of International Understanding in the New Millennium." Below are photos taken at the event by *James Moolom* and *Susan Jatau*.



Ambassador Campbell share a happy moment with the representative of the Kano State Governor Alhaji Ibrahim Garba.



More than 250 faculty and students of Bayero University Kano attended the 2006 FAAN conference.



FAAN Officials present a souvenir bag to Ambassador Campbell.



(L-r), U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Atim George; former VC Unilag Prof. Jelili Omotola; and Counselor for Public Affairs Claudia Anyaso



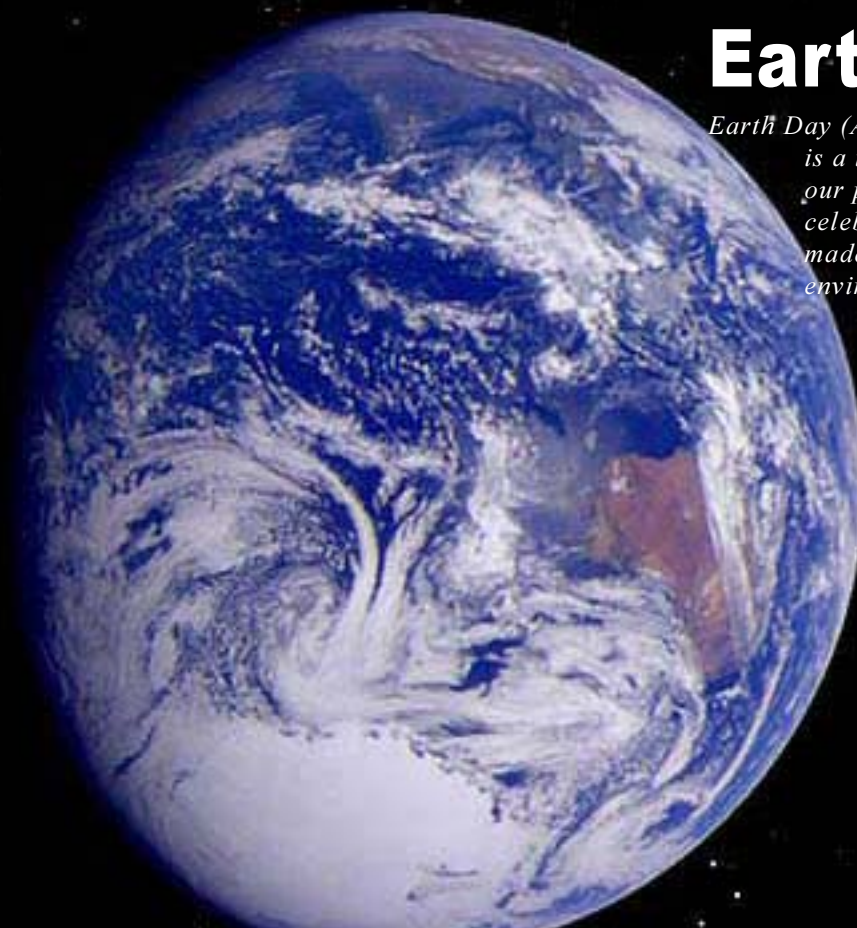
Chairman of the occasion, Prof. Shehu Galadanci making his remarks at 2006 FAAN conference in Kano.



Dr. Aminigo of the University of Port Harcourt presenting a paper at the Kano conference.

Earth Day

Earth Day (April 22) and every day is a time to act to protect our planet. It is a time to celebrate gains we have made in accelerating environmental progress.



April

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2006

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
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2 <i>Commissioning American Corner Bauchi</i>	3 <i>Inauguration of Shared Futures Program (Buachi).</i>	4 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	5 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	6 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	7	8
9	10	11 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	12 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	13 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	14	15
16	17	18 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	19 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	20 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	21	22 <i>Earth Day</i>
23	24	25 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	26 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja/Lagos)</i>	27 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	28	29

Please note that ALL events on this calendar are STRICTLY by invitation. For enquiries please call 09-461-4000 or 01-263-3395.